

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 07291 241923Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7833
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
USNATO 4931
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PEKING
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 7291

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM

1. SUMMARY: CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE HELD A PLENUM MAY 24.
PODGORNY WAS REMOVED FROM THE POLITBURO, AND
KATUSHEV FROM THE SECRETARIAT. K.V. RUSAKOV WAS
APPOINTED TO THE SECRETARIAT. BREZHNEV DELIVERED A
SPEECH ENDORSING THE DRAFT FOR A NEW CONSTITUTION
WHICH THE PLENUM APPROVED. END SUMMARY.
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 07291 241923Z

2. THE KEY CADRE CHANGE AT THE ONE-DAY CPSU
PLENUM WAS THE REMOVAL OF N.V. PODGORNY FROM
THE POLITBURO. WHILE PODGORNY IS STILL HEAD
OF STATE (AS CHAIRMAN OF THE PRESIDUM OF THE
SUPREME SOVIET, HE WILL PROBABLY LOSE THIS
POSITION TOO AT THE SUPREME SOVIET SESSION

SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 16. WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT PODGORNYY'S DEPARTURE WAS FOR REASONS OF HEALTH OR AGE (HE IS 74) WE NOTE THAT THE LANGUAGE "RELIEVED NIKOLAY PODGORNYY OF HIS DUTIES" AS POLITBURO MEMBER DOES NOT HAVE ANY OF THE QUALIFIERS (SUCH AS "IN CONNECTION WITH GOING ON PENSION") THAT WOULD HAVE STRENGTHENED THE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD GONE OF HIS OWN FREE WILL.

3. WHATEVER THE REASON FOR PODGORNYY'S DEPARTURE, IT OPENS UP A SLOT IN THE POLITBURO, AND ALSO WILL PRESUMABLY OPEN A SLOT FOR ANOTHER POLITBURO MEMBER TO BECOME HEAD OF THE SUPREME SOVIET PRESIDUM. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL HOW THE SUCCESSION ISSUE WILL SHAPE UP. THIS WILL BECOME CLEARER IF, AS WE EXPECT, A NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE PRESIDUM IS IN FACT APPOINTED AT THE SUPREME SOVIET SESSION.

4. THE OTHER CADRE CHANGES WERE THE REMOVAL OF K.F. KATUSHEV FROM THE SECRETARIAT "IN CONNECTION WITH HIS DUTIES IN CEMA" AND THE ELEVATION OF K.V. RUSAKOV TO THE SECRETARIAT (NO MENTION OF USTINOV'S POSITION IN THE SECRETARIAT WAS MADE.) KATUSHEV'S REMOVAL IS NOT TOO SURPRISING; WHEN HE WAS MADE A DEPUTY PREMIER AND SOVIET REPRESENTATIVE TO CEMA ON MARCH 16 WE NOTED (MOSCOW 3665) THAT HE MIGHT BE DROPPED FROM THE SECRETARIAT. IT MARKS A CLEAR DEMOTION FOR HIM. RUSAKOV, AGED 67, HAS RECENTLY SERVED

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 07291 241923Z

AS BREZHNEV'S SENIOR AIDE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE HAS ALSO HAD EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE WORKING CLOSELY WITH OTHER LEADERS, AMONG THEM KOSYGIN AND ANDROPOV. THIS REPRESENTS A DISTINCT PROMOTION FOR HIM.

5. AT THE PLENUM BREZHNEV DELIVERED THE MAJOR SPEECH, WHICH WAS DEVOTED TO THE NEW DRAFT CONSTITUTION. BREZHNEV SPOKE BOTH AS GENERAL SECRETARY AND AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION. HE EXPLAINED THE REASONS FOR THE ADOPTION OF A NEW CONSTITUTION (THE PRESENT ONE IS THE STALIN CONSTITUTION OF 1936) AND IMPLIED THAT THE NEW CONSTITUTION WOULD BE ADOPTED IN THIS 60TH JUBILEE YEAR. THE PLENUM APPROVED THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION AND ALSO APPROVED A DECISION TO OPEN THE DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION AT THE SUPREME SOVIET SESSION.

6. THE PLENUM APPROVED A REPORT BY SUSLOV ON
THE TEXT AND MUSIC OF THE SOVIET NATIONAL ANTHEM.
(THE ANTHEM HAS NOT BEEN SUNG FOR MANY YEARS SINCE
THE OLD TEXT IS A GLORIFICATION OF STALIN.)
MATLOCK

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